Environment Canada Parks Service
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JASPER NATIONAL PARK

PLANNING PROGRAM

FOR

JASPER PARK LODGE REDEVELOPMENT

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Canada

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JASPER PARK LODGE REDEVELOPMENT

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Dear Participant;

Canadian Pacific Hotels (CP Hotels) has recently announced their preliminary development plans for Jasper Park Lodge. The Jasper National Park Management Plan permits further development on the Jasper Park Lodge lease and directs that a separate planning process be undertaken to provide redevelopment guidance.

A relatively large area is held under lease, on lands which are a part of a scarce ecosystem of Jasper National Park. Care must be taken to ensure that the ultimate size and form of development in this sensitive location does not compromise national park values.

The Canadian Parks Service requires that CP Hotels prepare a Long Range Development Plan which describes the extent of development proposed and its environmental and socio-economic implications.

As directed by the Jasper National Park Management Plan, the Canadian Parks Service will be preparing Planning Guidelines to provide direction about the appropriate type and level of development on the Jasper Park Lodge leasehold. The guidelines will assist CP Hotels in preparing their Long Range Development Plan.

Because of the significance of the proposed Jasper Park Lodge redevelopment, public consultation will be an integral part of the planning and review process. There will be opportunities for public comment at two stages: review of the draft Planning Guidelines and review of the draft Long Range Development Plan.

This Planning Framework introduces the planning program and outlines the principles and procedures which will be followed. If you would like to become involved in the review of the Planning Guidelines please fill out the enclosed self-addressed card and send it to our Public Consultation Co-ordinator. Your name will be added to the program's mailing list and draft Planning Guidelines will be sent to you for comment.

Once the Planning Guidelines are completed, CP Hotels will prepare the draft Long Range Development Plan for the Jasper Park Lodge. At that time, a public meeting will be held in the Town of Jasper (and elsewhere if appropriate) to seek public comments on the plan. Public comments will be a major factor in determining the final scale and form of development to be approved.

Public consultation has long been an important factor in the decision making process at the Canadian Parks Service. Your input will help to ensure the continued success of Canada's national parks system, and I'd like to thank you for interest in this planning program.

G. Fortin

G. Fortin
Superintendent
Jasper National Park

Jasper Park Lodge Planning Framework

Introduction

Jasper Park Lodge is located in the Athabasca River Valley, 6 km east of the Town of Jasper. As directed by the Jasper National Park Management Plan, the Canadian Parks Service is preparing Planning Guidelines to provide direction about the appropriate type and level of development on the Jasper Park Lodge leasehold. The purpose of this Planning Framework is to define the planning principles upon which the Guidelines will be based, and to outline the planning process.

Canadian Pacific Hotels holds about 365 hectares (903 acres) under lease. This property is bounded by the Athabasca River on the west and the lower slopes of Signal Mountain on the east. It extends past Trefoil Lakes on the north, and slightly beyond Lac Beauvert on the south.

The Canadian Parks Service is entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the pristine beauty of Jasper National Park, while at the same time, encouraging visitor appreciation and enjoyment. Careful stewardship is required to meet this responsibility. Facility management and development cannot be isolated from the protection of resources, and must safeguard plant and animal habitats as well as the physical surroundings and aesthetics of the park.

The Jasper Park Lodge lease is located in an area designated in the Jasper National Park Management Plan as Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation. Zone IV - Outdoor Recreation comprises less than 1% of the park and represents the frontcountry area of Jasper National Park.

Approximately 98% of the park is managed as Zone II - Wilderness. The remaining management zones: Zone I - Special Preservation, Zone III - Natural Environment, and Zone V - Park Services each account for less than 1% of the park.

A broad range of recreational and accommodation facilities and services are permitted in this zone if compatible with site specific environmental concerns.

The existing facilities include a main lodge and 62 guest accommodation structures. There are a variety of single and multiple occupancy units. Some are part of the original development (about 65 years old) and others are newer. There is capacity for 825 guests. On-site staff accommodation houses up to 500 persons. Numerous service buildings are present - greenhouse, laundry, powerhouse, service station, engineering and maintenance.

Jasper Park Lodge provides for a number of recreational pursuits. Horse riding facilities include barns, corrals and trails. Stock is stabled on-site during the summer and fall. An 18-hole golf course provides for golfing during the spring, summer and fall. During the winter, cross-country ski trails are groomed on the golf course. Numerous hiking trails radiate out from the lodge area, and a barbecue/picnic facility is located at Trefoil Lake. Canoeing and non-motorized boating on Lac Beauvert are popular. A swimming pool and tennis courts are part of the resort.

The Jasper National Park Management Plan permits further environmentally appropriate development on the Jasper Park Lodge lease. The park management plan also confirms that the golf course may expand within the existing leasehold if environmentally appropriate, and that efforts be made to reduce the impact of the horse operation.

The Planning Guidelines for Jasper Park Lodge are being established to assist CP Hotels in formulating their Long Range Development Plan. The Planning Guidelines will be developed within the policy framework established by the Jasper National Park Management Plan. The Planning Guidelines will set the parameters within which the long range plan will be developed. The guidelines will ensure that development is appropriate with the natural character and beauty of the area, reinforcing the natural landscape setting.

The guidelines will address environmental, cultural, architectural, aesthetic and socio-economic issues associated with redevelopment. They will focus on the environmental and experiential qualities that make Jasper Park Lodge a special place; identifying areas where development is environmentally appropriate and defining the limits of acceptable change associated with redevelopment.

The guidelines will ensure that visitor and local needs are met while protecting and enhancing ecological and cultural integrity. The goal is to maintain the quality of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations, avoiding the erosion of the very qualities that give the area its special character.

The planning program is an active exercise in ecological and social responsibility, involving working partnerships between the Government of Canada, the tourism industry and the public. Decisions must be based upon complex environmental, social and economic factors to ensure that redevelopment achieves an appropriate balance between the built and natural environments and retains the Lodge's internationally renowned character.

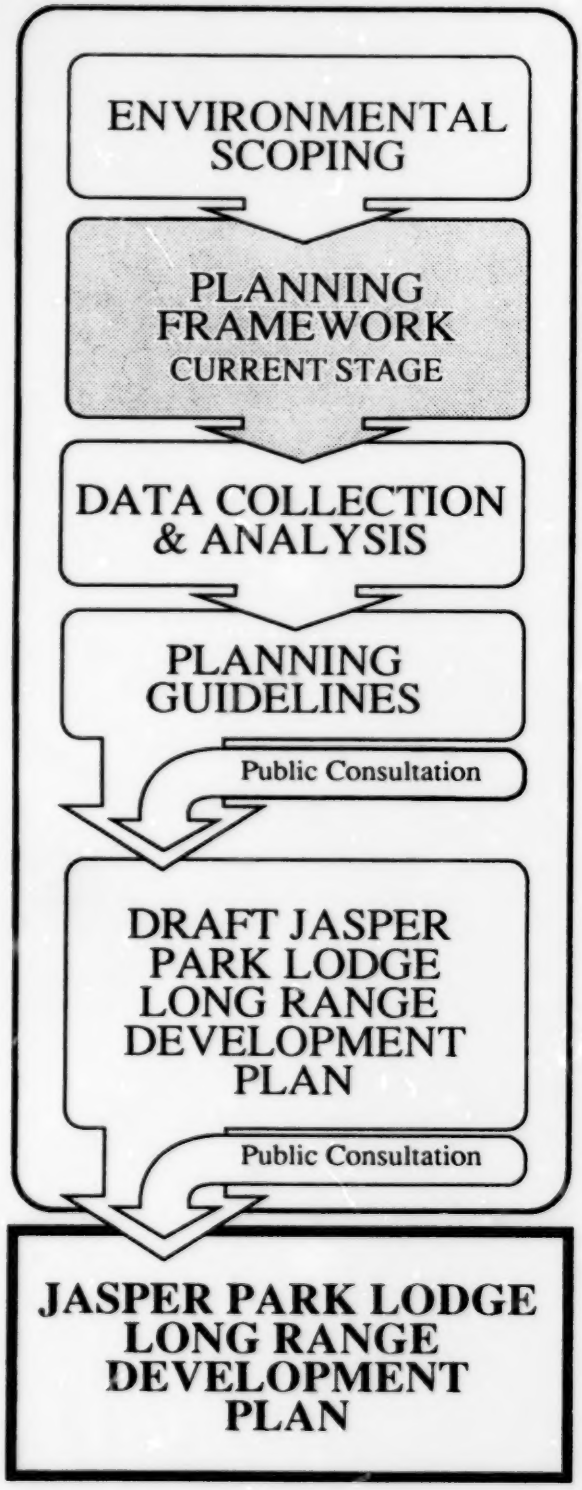
Tourism development in national parks must maintain environmental quality at the same time as having economic benefits. The guidelines will be directed toward achieving desired environmental, experiential, and socio-economic conditions rather than relying on arbitrary limits such as percentage of the leasehold or floor area ratio, to determine the appropriate amount of development.

The results of the natural and cultural resource inventory, resource sensitivity analysis, and socio-economic analysis will be used to determine the appropriate type and level of development. Redevelopment must result in a net gain in national park values. Mountain vistas, significant natural and cultural resources, and wildlife habitats are the features that make Jasper Park Lodge a special place, and must not be compromised by redevelopment.

JASPER PARK

LODGE LEASEHOLD

The Planning Process



1. Environmental Scoping

Environmental factors will be considered at every step in the planning process, through application of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Process. As a first step, an environmental scoping exercise (an overview of environmental concerns) was conducted by Canadian Parks Service scientists to identify the environmental concerns and valued ecosystem components which must be given particular consideration in the review of any development proposals. The results of the scoping study along with the park management plan form the basis for the planning principles outlined in the Planning Framework. The Environmental Scoping is available, upon request, from the Public Consultation Coordinator.

Valued Ecosystem Components

There are several natural resource values on, or adjacent to, the Jasper Park Lodge property which are highly valued and must be particularly considered in development and management of the facility. Criteria used to identify these "valued ecosystem components" are:

a) **Visitor-use values**: a resource which a visitor would find particularly memorable and unique to a National Park. For example, the opportunity to view wildlife.

b) **Park Purpose and Objectives**: a resource which is especially important in the successful achievement of the park purpose and objectives. For example, natural landscapes without evidence of human intrusion are critical to the perception of national parks as protected areas.

c) **Representativeness**: a resource which is a particularly good example of features typical of the natural region which Jasper National Park represents. For example, Douglas fir forests are representative of a mature stage of succession in the Montane ecoregion.

d) **Unique/Rare/Limit of Range**: a resource which is unique, rare, or at the limit of its natural range. For example, rare plant species are typically considered as valued ecosystem components.

e) **Sensitivity**: a resource which can be easily impacted by use, which is exceptionally difficult to rehabilitate, or cannot be recreated. Vegetation on steep, droughty south-facing slopes, important seasonal habitats, breeding sites used by rare, sensitive or threatened species, and species sensitive to human activities such as grizzly bears, wolves, cougar and raptors are good examples.

f) **Inter-relationship or movement**: a resource which, if altered, could seriously effect interdependent resources/processes. For example, reducing the availability of travel routes to wildlife can have an effect on wildlife populations which may be resident in other areas, but must travel through the effected region.

g) **Limitations to Development:** a resource which may have limitations to development. For example, steep slopes and wet soils both present difficulties for building construction.

Based on these characteristics, the following environmental factors are identified as "valued ecosystem components", requiring special consideration and protection in any plan for further development of the Jasper Park Lodge lease.

Aesthetics and Visual Quality

Aesthetic values are a major factor in determining both the opportunities and constraints for development on the Jasper Park Lodge leasehold. The opportunity to view beautiful, natural landscapes is likely the most important visitor-use value in Jasper National Park. It is key to maintaining the image of the park as a protected area, and is integral to the justification of Jasper National Park as part of the Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site.

The Lodge is only visible from a couple of locations along Highway 16 and the CN rail line, and from the Whistlers and the Marmot Basin ski area. The secluded low visibility status enhances the area's aesthetic quality.

Jasper Park Lodge is noteworthy for its architectural motif which blends comfortably with its setting in a national park. The buildings are low profile, and emphasize wood and stone material and natural colours. There has always been a strong emphasis to preserve and maintain a park-like setting on the grounds. Major landscape reshaping has not occurred in the Jasper Park Lodge area, although substantial terrain modification was undertaken at the golf course.

Montane Ecoregion

The whole Jasper Park Lodge leasehold is located in the Montane Ecoregion. This ecoregion has limited representation in the Rocky Mountain national parks. This ecoregion is of special importance to the greater Jasper National Park ecosystem because of its limited extent and high importance to wildlife and park visitors. The Montane Ecoregion is one of the most precious wildlife habitats in the Canadian Rocky Mountain national parks. It is particularly important as winter habitat. Effects on wildlife in this ecoregion can have far-ranging consequences for wildlife throughout the park.

Douglas fir/grassland vegetation complex

Within the Montane ecoregion, the Douglas fir forest component is scarce and precious. It is particularly sensitive to development because once damaged, it is almost impossible to re-create. The Douglas fir/grassland savannah which occurs in limited areas of the Athabasca River valley is one of the most aesthetically pleasing vegetation communities in the park, providing inviting opportunities for pedestrian and equestrian activities.

Wildlife Habitat

The Jasper Park Lodge is located in a part of the Athabasca River Valley which is highly favoured by many wildlife species. At the junction of three major rivers - the Athabasca, Maligne and Miette, it is a traditional fall/winter congregation location for elk. Jasper Park Lodge lands are part of a valley-bottom montane ecosystem which is particularly attractive to elk. Although elk are year-round occupants of the Jasper vicinity, fall congregations would be several hundred animals. Nearly all of these elk occupy or traverse the Jasper Park Lodge property during their tenure in the valley. Several hundred elk graze over winter in this area and although most of these elk relocate to tributary valleys or higher elevations during summer, about 50 to 60 head reside in the valley and include Jasper Park Lodge lands in their lifelong habitat. Mule deer inhabit the lower slopes of Signal Mountain adjacent to the golf course. Special species such as wolves, cougars, grizzly and black bears range across the property. Activities on the Jasper Park Lodge leasehold have the potential to create far-ranging effects to wildlife throughout the Athabasca Valley.

Water Quality

Trefoil Lakes (2 lakes), Mildred Lake and Lac Beauvert are contained within the lease boundary. These are all pothole lakes without surface inflow, although both Mildred and Lac Beavert have a seepage outflow to the Athabasca River. The maintenance of water quality is an important concern.

Historical and Archaeological Resources

Jasper Park Lodge is an historical entity in itself. The first commercial accommodation on the site was "Tent City", (or Jasper Park Camp) constructed and operated by Robert Kenneth in 1915. The Canadian National Railway (CNR) took over Tent City in 1921, and opened the Japer Park Lodge in 1922. Jasper Park Lodge has been owned and operated by CP Hotels since 1988.

The original lodge burned to the ground in 1952 and the present lodge opened within one year. The first golf course was constructed in 1922, but has been completely rebuilt several times since.

General archaeological surveys in this part of the Athabasca Valley have not revealed any exceptional prehistoric resources. Site examination for senior staff housing and main lodge renovations at Jasper Park Lodge discovered evidence of prehistoric occupation, but not of any noteworthy importance.

2. Planning Framework (The Current Stage)

As stated earlier the purpose of this stage is to define planning principles and outline the planning process.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The following describes the principles upon which the Planning Guidelines will be developed and the work required to support preparation of the Long Range Development Plan.

- ***Where conflicts occur between resource protection and increased use and facility development, resource protection takes precedence.***

- ***The Planning Guidelines will ensure the quality of the environment is maintained for the benefit of present and future generations, avoiding the erosion of the very qualities that give the area its special character. Redevelopment must result in a net gain in environmental values. Mountain vistas, significant natural and cultural resources, and important wildlife habitats are features that make Jasper Park Lodge a special place and must not be compromised by redevelopment.***

- ***The preservation of important seasonal wildlife habitat and travel corridors, significant cultural resources, and natural shorelines and wetlands must be ensured. The impact of development on the Douglas fir/grassland component of the Montane Ecoregion must also be minimized.***

A detailed natural and cultural resource inventory, focusing on the valued ecosystem components, is required to provide the data necessary to ensure a sound environmental data base for planning. The Terms of Reference for the inventory is outlined in the Environmental Scoping Study attached.

- *Existing environmental concerns must be resolved.*

- *Management and operational practices, such as golf course management and effluent management, must be exemplary ensuring the state of the art in environmental sensitivity. The Long Range Development plan must outline operational techniques.*

- *The area's natural aesthetic quality must be preserved and enhanced. The secluded, low visibility status, and natural material appearance will be retained. Facilities and services must continue to have a minimal visual impact to visitors in other areas of the park. For example, it is a priority not to compromise prominent viewscapes such as the Athabasca River scarp. Secondarily, facilities should also be situated to provide guests with the best opportunities to view park landscapes.*

A detailed analysis of the views of the leasehold from popular viewpoints, such as the Town of Jasper, the Trans Canada Highway, CNR rail line, Whistlers, Marmot Ski Area and the Athabasca River is required to identify appropriate sites for development.

- *The Canadian Parks Service has two basic design and use objectives for facility development in national parks. Buildings introduced into national park environments must be unobtrusive, and environmentally sympathetic; and they must be in empathy with the land's inherent qualities. The architectural motif must blend into and not detract from the natural setting. The design features which presently give the Lodge its special rustic character and pleasant appearance must be retained.*

- *The opportunities for visitors to observe, photograph and study wildlife in natural habitats, is an important value requiring special consideration.*

- *The public will be provided with an opportunity to review:*
  - *Planning Guidelines*
  - *CP Hotel's Long Range Development Plan and associated environmental and socio-economic assessments*

- *Jasper Park Lodge must continue to provide a resort experience in which services are primarily for guests.*

- *Jasper Park Lodge currently has a significant economic and social impact on the park and the Town of Jasper. Direct and indirect costs, such as infrastructure costs, to the Town and Canadian Parks Service must be minimized.*

- *A comprehensive environmental and socio-economic impact assessment of the Long Range Development Plan is required. The impact assessment will consider the potential cumulative impacts associated with plan implementation. The Canadian Parks Service (CPS) will prepare the impact assessment based upon the environmental and socio-economic data collected by CP Hotels. CPS will emphasize the philosophy of "no net loss" for the environment of Jasper National Park. Detailed site specific assessment screenings will also be performed at more advanced stages of plan implementation. EARP (Environmental Assessment and Review Process) requirements are outlined further in the Environmental Scoping Study.*

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis stage will consist of:

- natural and cultural resource inventories of the property;
- a visibility/aesthetic quality analysis; and
- a socio-economic analysis of the preliminary development concept.

4. Planning Guidelines

The Canadian Parks Service will use the data collected and the Planning Framework principles to prepare the detailed planning guidelines. The Planning Guidelines will direct CP Hotels in the preparation of their Long Range Development Plan.

The guidelines will address environmental, cultural, architectural, aesthetic and socio-economic issues associated with redevelopment. The Planning Guidelines set the parameters within which the Long Range Development Plan will be prepared by identifying areas where development is environmentally appropriate and defining the limits of acceptable change associated with redevelopment. Draft Planning Guidelines will be sent to interested members of the public for review. Special meetings would also be arranged upon request.

Once public comments on the draft Planning Guidelines have been incorporated, the revised guidelines will direct CP Hotels in preparing their Long Range Development Plan.

5. Draft Long Range Development Plan

The Canadian Parks Service will review CP Hotel's Long Range Development Plan within the context of the Planning Guidelines. If the plan is within the limits of the Planning Guidelines, it will be presented to the public for review at a public meeting to be held in the Town of Jasper (and elsewhere if appropriate).

Environmental and socio-economic assessments of the development proposals will also be presented to assist the public in their review. Public comments on the Long Range Development Plan will be used by the Canadian Parks Service to assist in determining the final scale and form of development to be approved.

A newsletter providing a summary of final decisions will be made available to the public.

If you would like to become involved in the review of the Planning Guidelines, please fill out the enclosed self-addressed card or write to the address indicated below. Your name will be added to the programs mailing list and draft Planning Guidelines will be sent to you for comment.

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